



SUN PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

F-07
Crash Investigations
Field Operations

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| POLICY NUMBER: F-07 | DATE: March 17, 2015 |
| SUBJECT: Crash Investigations | APPROVED BY: Sgt. Jason Lefeber |
| AUTHOR/ORIGINATOR: Jason Lefeber | SECTION MONITOR: |
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Policy

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The Sun Prairie Police Department shall investigate traffic crashes as directed in this policy.

Officers responding to the scene of a crash shall secure the scene, provide medical assistance if needed, investigate the crash and clear the scene of damaged vehicles, debris or hazardous materials as soon as practical to re-open the roadway. The department recognizes different levels of investigation, ranging from simple reporting through cause analysis.

Crash investigation involves data collection at a scene, which reflects the potential or probable need for information at a later time. The department further recognizes the successful prosecution of law violators involved in crashes frequently requires careful scrutiny of all available data.

Objective

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1. To fulfill legal reporting requirements.
2. To assist in the exchange of driver and vehicle information.
3. To document the facts of the crash for use in education and engineering.
4. To determine the cause of the crash and take action on law violations.

Definitions

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Crash:

An occurrence which originates or terminates on a traffic way, which involves at least one motor vehicle in transport and results in injury or death to any person, or damage to property. Also often referred to as an "accident".

Fatal Crash:

Any injury received in a traffic crash which results in death within 30 days of the crash.

Reportable Crash:

A crash which results in any of the following:

1. Injury or fatality of a person.
2. Total damage to one person's property to an apparent extent of \$1000 or more.
3. Damage to government-owned property to an apparent extent of \$200 or more, except government-owned vehicles, which are \$1000.

Self Report Crash:

A crash, which may or may not be reportable under Wisconsin Statutes, which is not immediately reported to the department. A self report crash is one in which the involved parties leave the scene without notifying the department, an officer is not dispatched to the scene and one or both parties later report the crash. Hit and run crashes shall not be classified self report crashes even if the reporting party does not immediately notify the department.

Statewide Traffic Operations Center:

A statewide monitoring center which is tasked with managing traffic congestion and improving transportation safety, mobility, and efficiency on Wisconsin Highways.

Traffic Way:

Any premises open to the public as a matter of right or custom for use of their motor vehicles whether the premises are publicly or privately owned. This includes all premises provided by employers to employees for the use of their motor vehicles and all premises provided to tenants of rental housing in buildings of 4 or more units for the use of their motor vehicles whether such premises are publicly or privately owned and whether or not a fee is charged for the use thereof.

Procedure

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A. GENERAL

1. Officers shall respond, investigate, and complete reports as directed by state law and department procedures. Officers shall conduct an initial investigation to determine whether the crash is reportable as defined in this policy. If there is any question as to the possibility of injury or extent of damage, officers should err on the side of the crash being reportable.
2. S.S. 346.73 prohibits crash reports from being used as evidence in any judicial trial, civil or criminal court. As such, crash reports and other case documentation will be completed in such a way that each is independent of the other. Additionally, crash reports will not be used to support or in any way substantiate any charges.
3. Nothing in this policy shall preclude an officer from considering or a supervisor from directing, that additional investigation or reporting be completed.
4. A supervisor may request additional assistance from resources within or outside of the department during the course of a crash investigation. Examples include, but are not limited to, Sun Prairie Detective Bureau personnel, Wisconsin State Patrol, and the Dane County Sheriff's Office.

B. SCENE PROCEDURES

1. Officers assigned to a crash scene shall:
 - Upon arrival, position their squad so as to protect the crash scene from other vehicles and prevent the contamination of evidence. Identify any safety hazards such as fire concerns or hazardous materials spills.
 - Determine the extent of injuries, provide aid to the injured and summon emergency medical services, if needed.
 - Determine the need for and summon, if necessary, additional resources such as additional officers, community service officers, fire department or towing services for damaged vehicles.
 - Establish a safe traffic pattern around the crash scene while preserving evidence. Officers shall consider the use of squad arrow sticks, cones, and other available safety equipment. A reference guide for Emergency Traffic Control and Scene Management has been published and is attached for reference.
 - The Statewide Traffic Operations Center (STOC) shall be contacted for a closure of a State or US Highway lane or ramp for greater than thirty (30) minutes. Sun Prairie Dispatch can make this call on behalf of scene personnel. The STOC should be considered for management of major traffic crash scenes. The attached STOC reference guide provides more information on this organization.
 - As soon as practical, officers outside the vehicle, while at a roadway crash, shall wear a reflective safety vest and establish a safety zone around the crash scene using reflective cones or flares.
2. Special Circumstances:
 - *Hazardous Materials:*
 - Officers responding to any traffic crash or incident, where chemicals or other hazardous materials may be present, should be observant for evidence of a hazardous material spill.
 - If a hazardous materials spill is suspected, officers should stop their vehicles updrift and upwind from the scene of the spill. This position should be at sufficient distance to protect the officer from the effects of the spill. This position and observable spill details should be relayed to other responding units.
 - The primary initial objective of the first officers to arrive at the scene shall be to control the scene and prevent the hazardous material incident from worsening. These measures may include, but shall not be limited to:
 - i. Requesting additional officers and/or supervisor to the scene.

- ii. Requesting the Sun Prairie Fire Department (the Fire Chief or designee can request support from the HAZMAT Team).
 - iii. Requesting Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel at the scene.
 - iv. Preventing access to the contaminated area.
 - v. Establishing a danger area to include initiating an evacuation of the area as needed.
 - vi. Identification of the hazardous material(s) involved.
- *Impairment Due to Alcohol and/or Drugs:*
 - Officers responding to any traffic crash or incident should be observant for signs of impairment due to alcohol and/or drugs.
 - Refer to policy "Operating while Intoxicated" (F-02).

C. REPORTABLE CRASHES

1. Except for "Self-Report" crashes, officers shall respond to reportable crashes and accomplish the following procedures:

- Facilitate the exchange of information between involved parties.
- Check the driving, wanted status and proof of insurance of all operators.
- Record driver and vehicle information in the CAD.
- Investigate violations of the law.
- Obtain statements from involved parties and witnesses.
- Document the scene through the use of photography. Photos generally should not be taken for reportable crashes which involve property damage only. Reportable crash scenes involving injury/death or are investigated as a traffic crime shall be photographed.
- Complete a DOT Tracs Crash report.

2. Fatal or Life Threatening Injury Crashes:

- Crashes involving fatal or life threatening injuries shall require officers to collect and preserve physical evidence from the scene. A mutual aid request from the Wisconsin State Patrol or the Dane County Sheriff's Office should be placed for crash reconstruction.
- The Dane County District Attorney's office has an ADA dedicated to assist Dane County law enforcement agencies investigate crashes which result in fatality or great bodily injury **and** may result in criminal charges being filed. The appointed ADA **should** be called for **all qualifying crashes** as the appointed ADA will make every effort to come out on the crash scene to assist with the investigation. Please refer to the attached Dane County Crash Protocol, which includes:
 - The name and phone number of the appointed ADA
 - An outline on the investigative process once on scene
 - A checklist of best practices for police first responders
 - A checklist of best practices for police first responder supervisors
- Fatal crashes require completion of a *Tracs Fatal Accident Supplemental Form* and sending an *Administrative Message (TTY)* to "MVFR" to include:
 - Date and time of the crash.
 - Name, Sex, DOB, Time and Date of Death of person(s) Killed.
 - Location of crash.
 - Total number and type of units involved.
 - Role and safety equipment used by person(s) killed.

- Name of Investigating Agency.

D. NON-REPORTABLE CRASHES

1. Officers shall respond to non-reportable crashes and accomplish the following procedures:
 - Facilitate the exchange of information between involved parties.
 - Check the driving, wanted status and proof of insurance of all operators.
 - Record driver and vehicle information in the CAD.
 - Investigate violations of the law related to serious contributing factors (i.e. OMVWI, Reckless Driving).

E. SELF-REPORT CRASHES

1. Except in unusual cases, officers will not investigate or complete reports for self-report crashes. Self-report crashes involving serious injury or very substantial damage shall be referred to a supervisor for determination whether an investigation should be completed.
2. If appropriate, officers shall advise the involved parties to complete *Driver's Report of Accident (MV4002)*.

F. HIT-AND-RUN CRASHES

1. Officers shall complete a D.O.T. Tracs crash report when the Hit-and-Run is a reportable crash. Based on the seriousness or complexity of the case additional reporting maybe necessary.
2. Non-Reportable hit-and-run crashes will be documented through an Incident Report.
3. In either case, statements, photographs and evidence shall be collected when possible.
4. Hit-and-run crashes reported by the victim at the department or by telephone shall be investigated in the same manner as other hit-and-run crashes .
5. Officers shall diligently investigate all hit-and-run crashes. The officer shall keep the victim of the crash informed of the case's progress until solved or declared inactive due to the lack of further investigative leads.
6. Shift alerts by radio broadcasts or MDC (e.g. ATL, BOLO) to other department members will be utilized as appropriate. Administrative Messages to other agencies will be utilized to notify them of suspect/vehicle information where appropriate and after supervisor approval.

G. CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE OWNED VEHICLE CRASHES (excluding Police Department Vehicles)

1. Officers shall respond to City of Sun Prairie owned vehicle crashes and accomplish the following procedures:
 - Facilitate the exchange of information between involved parties.
 - Check the driving, wanted status and proof of insurance of all operators.
 - Record driver and vehicle information in the CAD.
 - Investigate violations of the law.
 - Obtain statements from involved parties and witnesses.
 - Document the scene (including damage and injuries) through the use of photography.
 - Complete a DOT Tracs Crash report (notify supervisor if crash would otherwise be considered non reportable. The completed Tracs crash report will not be transmitted by supervisor after review process.)

H. CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE POLICE DEPARTMENT VEHICLE CRASHES

1. Any member of the department involved in a traffic crash while operating a department vehicle shall immediately start recording using the in-squad video equipment and contact dispatch, who will notify a supervisor.
2. Crashes involving department vehicles which result in damage to property not owned by the city will be investigated by an outside agency. For crashes occurring within the City of Sun Prairie the Wisconsin State Patrol shall be considered first, followed by the Dane County Sheriff's Office. If access to an outside agency is not possible, a supervisor will conduct the investigation. Crashes occurring outside the city limits will be investigated by the agency having jurisdiction.

3. A supervisor, at their discretion, may investigate crashes involving department vehicles, other than above.
4. Whenever a crash or squad damage is investigated by a supervisor, a Sun Prairie Police Department Crash /Damage Checklist shall be completed. Non-reportable crashes involving damage to city property only do not require a Tracs report and shall be documented in a written report. Damage to department vehicles which are not the result of a crash will be documented in a written report.
5. The employee involved will complete an Officers Report and forward it to the supervisor responsible for the investigation.
6. Crash Review Board:
 - The department will establish an Crash Review Board to review all crashes involving department vehicles The members will consist of the department EVOC instructor(s) and the Assistant Chief.
 - The Board will meet every twelve months.The board will review the crashes involving department vehicles that occurred over the previous twelve months.
 - The Crash Review Board will complete a written report that includes a summary concerning the facts of each department vehicle crash that originated over the period under review. The Board will also include in the report identifiable trends, as well as recommended actions for reducing the frequency of department vehicle crashes.
 - The Crash Review Board will forward the report to the Chief of Police.
 - Department supervisors are responsible for the review of department vehicles crashes involving employees assigned to their work group. Follow-up actions intended to improve or reduce re-occurrence will be the responsibility of an employee's supervisor.

I. EMERGENCY CRASH INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

1. The Emergency Traffic Crash Investigation Procedure may be implemented when weather conditions or a temporary demand for police services prevents the department from rendering routine traffic crash investigation services for minor or damage only crashes.
2. A supervisor may initiate the Emergency Traffic Crash Investigation Procedure when either of the following conditions exists:
 - When weather conditions are so severe that officers are unable to respond to the scene of the crash due to the impassable road conditions or the department is unable to respond to the extreme volume of crashes in need of investigation.
 - When extraordinary demands are placed on the department for personnel intensive police services, e.g. natural or man-made disasters, riot, etc., which take priority over the delivery of other police services.
3. Upon notification by a supervisor that the Emergency Traffic Crash Investigation Procedure has been implemented, dispatchers shall defer the assignment of officers to traffic crashes which do not involve injuries, road blockage or otherwise present a continuing danger to the public. Citizen reports of crashes involving "unknown" injury or road blockage shall be assigned to an officer.
4. Officers at the scene of a property damage only reportable crash shall advise the involved parties to complete *Driver's Report of Accident* (MV4002) form. Officers shall have a supply of forms available for distribution.

Attachments

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| Posted | Title | Type |
|------------|---|------------------|
| 6/8/2010 | Statewide Traffic Operations Center | Reference Guide |
| 6/8/2010 | Traffic Incident Management Area | Reference Guide |
| 6/21/2011 | Drivers Report of Accident (MV4002) | PDF |
| 12/18/2011 | DA Crash Protocol | Reference (Docx) |

VI. HISTORY:

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| Date Published | Statement |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| September 5, 2013 | Replaces 9006.00 (06-18-08); updated 8-26-13 |
| March 17, 2015 | Replaces 9006.00 (06-18-08); updated 8-26-13; updated 02-03-14 |
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